

Clue Number 1



Excerpt from **Return to Roanoke**: by John White (1590)

“...We came to the place where I left our Colony in the year 1586. In all this way we saw in the sand the print of the Savages feet... and as we entered up the sandy bank upon a tree thereof were curiously carved these (English) letters C R O: which letters presently we knew to mean the place, where I should find the planters [colonists] seated, according to a secret token agreed upon between them & me at my last departure from them. Which was, that in anyways they should carve on the trees or posts of the doors the name of the place where they should be seated (gone to); for at my coming away they were prepared to remove from Roanoak 50 miles into the maine (mainland). Therefore at my departure from them in Anno 1587 I willed them, that if they should happen to be distressed in any of those places, that then they should carve over the letters or name, a Cross, but we found no such sign of distress.

And having well considered of this, we passed toward the place where they were left in sundry houses, but we found the houses taken downe, and the place very strongly enclosed with a high palisado of great trees, with corners and flankers very Fort-like, and one of the chief trees or posts at the right side of the entrance had the bark taken off, and 5 foot from the ground in fair Capital letters was graven (carved) CROATOAN without any cross or sign of distress; this done, we entered into the palisade (fence around the fort), where we found many bars of Iron, two pigges of Lead, four iron fowlers, Iron sacker-shoot (like bullets), and such like heavy things, thrown here and there, almost overgrown with grass and weeds...

I greatly joyed that I had safely found a certaine token of their [the colonists] safe being at Croatoan, which is the place where Manteo [friendly Indian chief] was borne, and the Savages of the land our friends.

1. **Where** were the colonists “prepared to remove” to?
2. What did the colonists leave behind in the fort? Why do you think they left these?
3. Using the passage, why did John White think the colonists were not in distress?
4. Why was he still “greatly joyed” at this point?

Second Clue

Finding the Lost Colony

By Brian Dunning (2011)

John Smith was told there was a town where men dressed as he did, and another Englishman, William Strachey, wrote that he was told of:

"...houses built with stone walles and one story above another, so taught them by those Englishe who escaped the slaughter at Roanoak, ...where the people breed up tame turkeys, about their houses, and take apes in the mountaines, and where, at Ritanoe, the Weroance, Eyanoco preserved seven of the English alive, - four men, two boyes, and one yonge maid (girl) (who escaped and fled up the river of Chanoke), to beat his copper of which he hath certaine mynes."-William Strachey (1612)

There is only one account of the Jamestown colonists actually encountering a person who appeared to be of English descent. He was seen in Powhatan territory in 1607, and was described as:

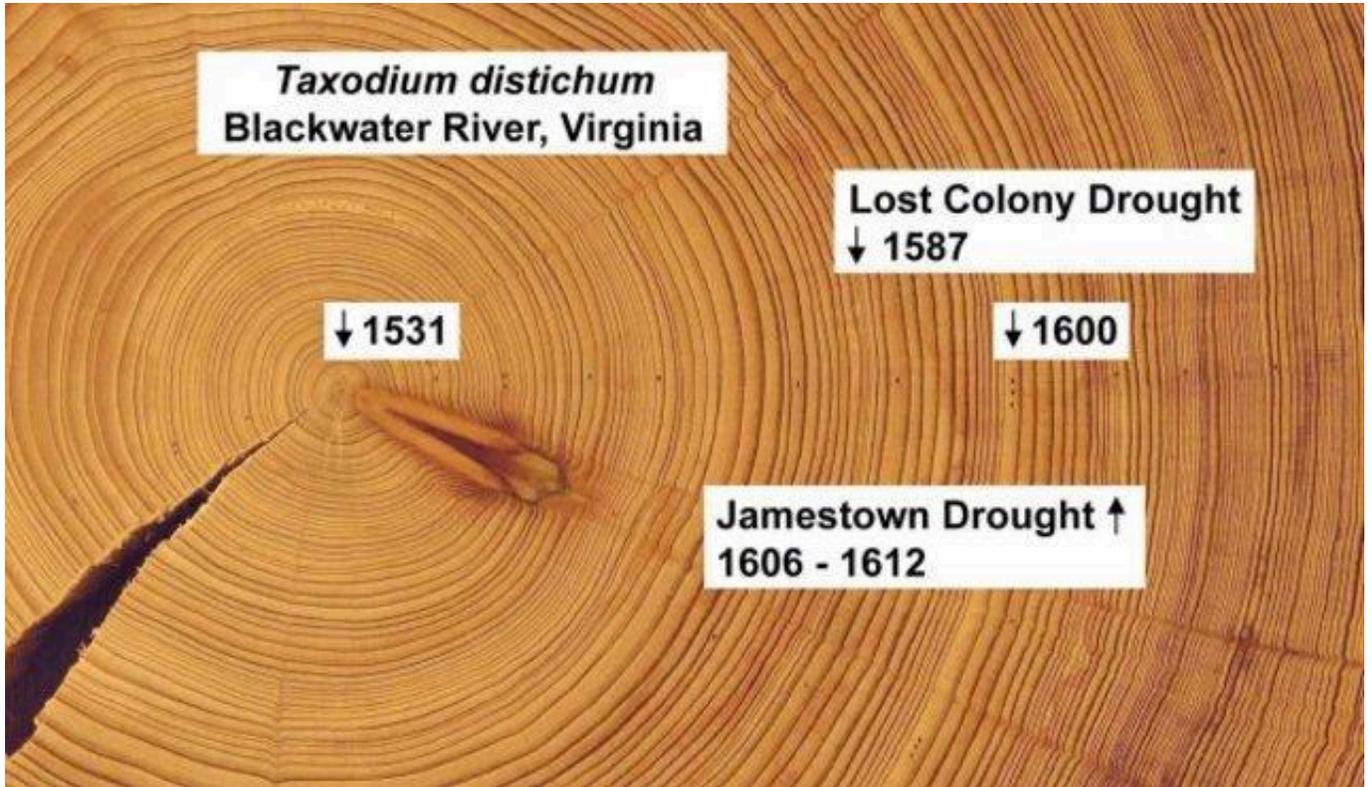
"a Savage Boy about the age of ten yeeres, which had a head of haire of a perfect yellow and a reasonable white skinne, which is a miracle amongst all the Savages."

If this is a true account, and the witnesses were not mistaken in their observation and reporting, then this boy would have been born some seven years after John White found the deserted colony. It seems probable that the boy was a descendant of the Roanoke settlers who had either been spared by the Powhatan or was raised by them. Either way, it would be evidence that some of the Roanoke colonists did seek refuge to the north.

Other accounts place the colonists south, either on Croatoan or on the Carolina coast. A century later, in the 1700s, surveyor John Lawson wrote that the Hatteras natives on Croatoan:

"tell us that several of their Ancestors were white People, and could talk in a Book, as we do; the Truth of which is confirmed by gray Eyes being found frequently amongst these Indians, and no others."

Third Clue



“We found no man nor signe that any had been there lately,
nor yet any fresh water in all this way to drink.”
–John White, Return to Roanoke, 1590

Fourth Clue:



ILLUSTRATION BY NORTH WIND PICTURE ARCHIVES/ALAMY

Have We Found the Lost Colony of Roanoke? By Tanya Basu, National Geographic Magazine, 2013

It's a mystery that has intrigued Americans for centuries: What happened to the lost colonists of North Carolina's Roanoke Island?

The settlers, who arrived in 1587, disappeared in 1590, leaving behind only two clues: the words "Croatoan" carved into a fort's gatepost and "Cro" etched into a tree.

Theories about the disappearance have ranged from an annihilating disease to a violent rampage by local Native American tribes. Previous digs have turned up some information and artifacts from the original colonists but very little about what happened to them.

Until now.

Thanks to technological advances and a cover-up on a map, researchers are getting closer to finding out what happened to the lost colony of Roanoke Island.

What Do We Know?

The lost colonists were the third group of English arrivals on North Carolina's Roanoke Island, settling near the modern-day town of Manteo.

The first group to arrive, in 1584, came to explore and map the land for future groups. A second group, which arrived in 1585, was charged with a military and scientific mission. But this second group's trip was far from peaceful.

"That's where tensions begin [with the local Native American tribes]," said Clay Swindell of the [Museum of the Albemarle](#) in Elizabeth City, North Carolina, a member of the archaeology team investigating the colony. He says that this second group was driven out in 1586 by local tribes angry that the colonists were taking up good land and resources.

The third group arrived in 1587. Entire families came with children—17 women and 11 children accompanied a party of 90 men. That meant the group wanted to settle in the New World and was not a military excursion, which would have included only male explorers.

Disappearing Act

Most researchers think the colonists likely encountered disease—caused by New World bacteria their bodies had never encountered before—or [Native] violence.

The research team thinks that when the crisis—whatever that may have been—hit, the [Roanoke] colonists split up into smaller groups and dispersed [spread out].

Eric Klinghofer is a historian and the principal investigator on the project. "It's a good strategy," he said, explaining that the previous group from 1585 had been ordered to do that if disaster struck. "We don't definitely know that they do, but it's obvious that that's the only way they could have survived. No single Indian tribe or village could have supported them. They would be even larger than some villages—I mean, they were over a hundred people."

The prevailing theory has been that the colonists abandoned Roanoke and traveled 50 miles south to Hatteras Island, which was then known as Croatoan Island. But, Klingelhofer said, what if they went in another direction?

What if some of the colonists traveled west via Albemarle Sound to the mouth of the Chowan River, to a protected inlet occupied by a sympathetic tribe?